



# PRESS RELEASE

## Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation *Chief Richard Weber*

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IRS – Criminal Investigation

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### **North Carolina Grocery Store Owner Sentenced to Prison for Conspiracy**

A Wendell, North Carolina, man was sentenced to 20 months in prison today following his plea of guilty to commit theft of government funds, Acting Assistant Attorney General Caroline D. Ciralo of the Department of the Justice's Tax Division and Acting U.S. Attorney John Stuart Bruce of the Eastern District of North Carolina announced.

According to court documents, Jose Alfonso Rodriguez Collado, 54, operated two grocery stores in Middlesex and Siler City, North Carolina. In 2012, co-conspirators brought Rodriguez fraudulently obtained U.S. Treasury checks, which Rodriguez cashed without receiving identification for the individuals listed on the checks, or any other source of authority for the co-conspirators to cash the checks. Rodriguez initially was not a licensed check casher, but one co-conspirator gave him \$50,000 to qualify for a check-cashing license. In exchange for cashing the fraudulently obtained U.S. Treasury checks, Rodriguez was paid a fee for cashing the checks in excess of that allowed for under North Carolina law. In addition, Rodriguez cashed checks in excess of \$10,000 and failed to file Currency Transaction Reports as required by law. The conspiracy caused a loss to the government of \$2,502,348.

In addition to the prison term, U.S. District Court Judge Louise W. Flanagan of the Eastern District of North Carolina ordered Rodriguez to serve three years of supervised release following his prison term, and pay restitution to the IRS in the amount of \$2,502,348.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Ciralo and Acting U.S. Attorney Bruce commended special agents of Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation who investigated the case and Trial Attorneys Lauren Castaldi and Nathan Brooks of the Tax Division, who prosecuted the case.

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